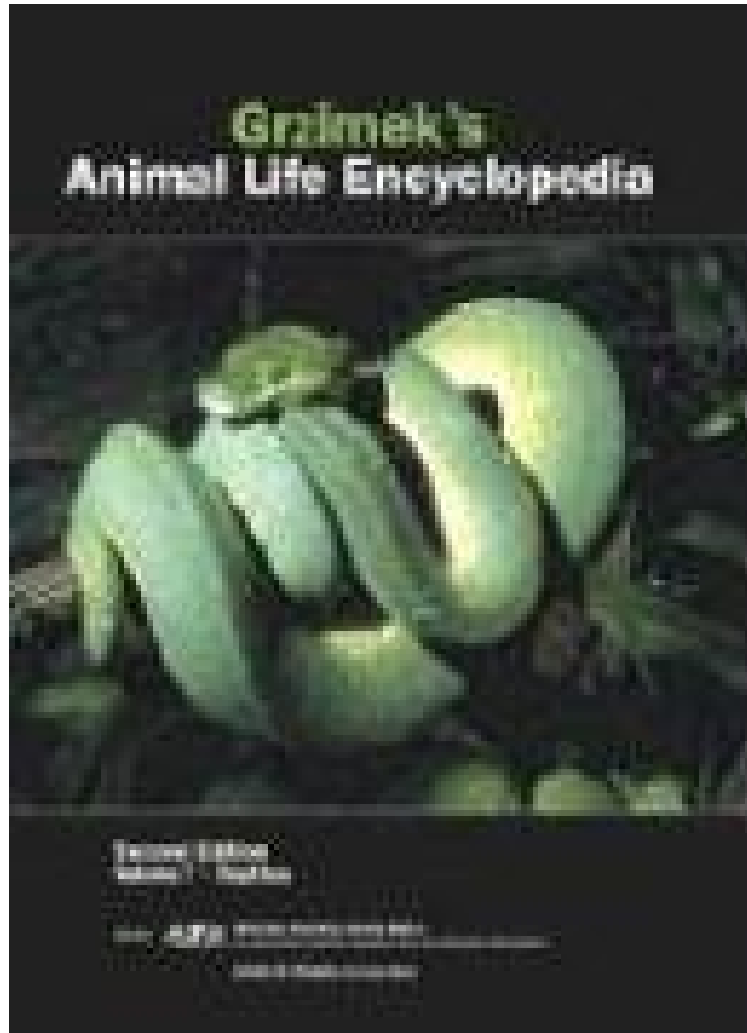


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Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia, Vol. 7: Reptiles, 2nd Edition

Michael Hutchins

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Michael Hutchins : Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia, Vol. 7: Reptiles, 2nd Edition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia, Vol. 7: Reptiles, 2nd Edition:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Completed my collectionBy Lee E MooreThis book was needed to complete my collection. I recommend these books to everyone I know. Highly recommended! Thank You!0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Save your money for something elseBy HipDeepInBooksThe original Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia (1975), Reptiles, was both a masterpiece and a classic of the new age of herpetological literature. That is, it was extremely well produced, included considerable useful (often new) information, presented (mostly) dazzling illustrations, and was an edited manuscript, meaning that sections were

written by established authorities for each group. IN COMPARISON the 2003 2nd edition is almost. The text is sketchy and inconsistent from section (and author) to section. Though it is again a compilation by many leading authorities, the text is bland, devoid of the "grit" a professional or experienced amateur would want, and not quite right for the rank amateur/beginner. Yet the editorial and writing teams have produced some good textual material and include many then-new facets of the broad field of reptile biology. It is not easy to be editor of a group of authoritative authors whose writing talents may range from sub-abysmal to sublime, so it is difficult to fault any particular person or persons with the undulating quality of the book's prose. The illustrations include some fine photos (but usually printed in tiny format) and cartoonish paintings that look like term projects for average 2nd year art students. This is NOT what I paid for, nor, I strongly suspect, what Prof. Dr Grzimek would want to associate his name. The bright spot for him is he was not alive to see the 2nd edition. Why is a professional group such as the the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) sponsoring such a volume? To steal from Kipling, "All the world wonders." Ironically, given all that we have learned about reptiles since the first edition, the original is still the (far) better book. With all the excellent post 2001 books on herpetology now available, I suggest that you spend your money on something else; your alternative would almost certainly be better.

Book by Hutchins, Michael

From Booklist*Starred * "Enjoyable reading" is not usually a phrase used in descriptions of encyclopedias, yet these four volumes of the second edition of Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia provide just that. Part of a 17-volume rewrite of the original 13-volume edition published beginning in 1967, these volumes exhibit excellence in writing, organization, illustration, and editing. Following an extensive six- to nine-chapter overview, organization is taxonomical. Each family or order is discussed in terms of general description, evolution, structure and function, distribution, habitat, behavior, feeding, reproduction, conservation status, and relationship to humans. These descriptions are generally followed by anywhere from 2 to 20 representative species accounts that include rich illustrations and range maps. Formatting and layout are similar in all of the volumes, making the set consistent and easy to use. Illustrations, photos, and maps are in full color, serving the needs and expectations of today's readers. Editing of the volumes is tight, yielding uniform entries written by numerous expert contributors. Volume 4 and volume 5--Fishes 1 and Fishes 2-- open with an elegant explanation of the diversity of the superclass Pisces and the difficulty of giving a general definition for all fish. Treatment is thorough despite the complexity of the topic caused by the sheer numbers of families, species, and habitats. Volume 6, Amphibians, includes introductory chapters on larvae and an expanded section on the early evolution and fossil history of amphibians. Volume 7, Reptiles, is the strongest of these excellent volumes. The contributors' expert knowledge and love of reptiles is evident. The "Order: Crocodylians" section is particularly well written. Indexing is good in all volumes, giving access to both taxonomic and common names. Bibliographic references and further readings are well chosen and current. Recommended Web sites are authoritative and well cited. Criticism of these volumes is minor but must include the observation that the glossaries are on the scanty side. Examples of significant terms that should have been included in the glossary for Reptiles include envenomated, hibernaculum, vomeronasal, vomerofaction, TSD (temperature dependent sex determination), and GSD (genetic sex determination). The scientific illustrations are extremely well done, and the illustrations and photos are present in just the right amount--there when needed yet not intruding on the text. The addition of some minor cross-referencing of page numbers between the species/family accounts and the in-text illustrations and maps would be helpful. These volumes are recommended for academic and larger public libraries. RBBCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved